The Impact of Professional Work Ethics on Productivity in Construction Consultancy [1, 2]

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ABSTRACT

The impact of Professional work ethics on productivity in construction consultancy cannot be underestimated as productivity contributes to the organization's success. The objectives of the study are to identify professional work ethics and evaluate the impact of these work ethics, with emphasis on construction consultants in Enugu and Anambra States. To achieve these objectives, a total number of eighty (80) questionnaires were administered on targeted respondents. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical (Person Correlation). Percentage and mean score (MIS) of the variables were also obtained and ranked accordingly in the presentation of the results. From the analysis of the investigation carried out, results showed that integrity, responsibility and respect are the most identified work ethics and has the greatest impact on productivity. There is a significant relationship between professional work ethics and productivity. More so, the evaluation of the impacts of professional work ethics on productivity will help to increase client's satisfaction, improve company's reputation and minimize potential lawsuits. The research concludes that inculcating professional work ethics in day-to-day work can improve the work performance and productivity of individuals at the workplace and subsequently affect organizational growth.

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1.0 Introduction

In today's competitive building construction markets, achieving clients' satisfaction is of utmost importance. Achieving client satisfaction is key in procuring future projects (Durdyev, Ihtiyar, Banaitis & Thurnell, 2018) and it adds value to the organization and has been identified as an effective tool for competitive advantage. The foundation of effective consulting lies in the ability to remain impartial and transparent, even under pressure. As consultants, we are often entrusted with sensitive information and are expected to provide unbiased advice. Hence, construction consultants have to go a long way to see that the clients who they are working for are satisfied. Professionals are expected to exhibit high level of professionalism by adhering to their professional ethics when discharging their duties (Usman, Inuwa & Iro 2012). While consultants provide critical insights and drive organizational change, maintaining high standards of ethics ensures the integrity of their work and fosters long-term client relationships.

Project Management Consultancies are essential for expediting the completion of construction projects within specified timeframes and budget constraints. Their involvement is imperative for fulfilling the requirements of financial institutions, meeting project deadlines, ensuring construction quality, and effectively executing all project activities from initiation to completion. Employing Project Management Consultancies not only enables the fulfilment of client needs but also plays a crucial role in achieving client satisfaction (Niraj, Eniya & Renu, 2024).

Though the consulting industry is evolving, the importance of ethics and professionalism remains constant. Organisational growth depends on the contribution of every employee at all levels. The performance of any company is affected by the work ethics that exist in its employees. Having a good work ethic causes the employees to make physical, mental, and emotional efforts in his work to fulfil and even exceed expectations (Mohammad, 2020). A professionally motivated and committed employee is the most wanted person in an organization. Employees with strong work ethics present themselves as professionals in every sense of the word. Referring matters to the organization, concentration, reliability, integrity, and other skills show that one is likely to be a good work ethic. Work ethics is a foundation on which a person's attitude is built. It encompasses the scholarly examination of concepts such as moral principles, ethical standards, notions of right and wrong, distinctions between good and evil, as well as the associated notions of obligation, responsibility, and morality (Lawal, 2023). Adhering to ethical guidelines ensures that we meet these expectations and maintain our professional integrity.

Any reputable organisation will make significant efforts to optimise productivity According to the report, adherence to organisational ethics has the distinct capability to enhance productivity, morale, and confidence within the workplace. Organisations derive financial gains from individuals who possess a robust work ethic, hence rendering such employees highly valued by firms. This implies that the absence of employee commitment, deficient organisational structure, and inadequate interpersonal abilities may exert an adverse impact on the overall productivity of the organization.

Ethics is one of the most crucial problems in organizations and especially in the human resources (Mohammad, 2020). Ethical dilemmas often arise in complex projects, where consultants must navigate competing interests. Whether working with private corporations, government entities, or non-profit organizations, consultants need to prioritize ethical practices to ensure their guidance remains objective. Man's abysmal failure to uphold ethical behaviour within the framework of employment relationship, necessitates continuous interrogation of the complex issues, which arise from the asymmetry between productivity and employees' commitment. Lack of ethical behaviours in organizations affect employee relations. Low progress has also been associated with work ethics (Sunday & Michael, 2018). When employees have no proper work ethics or right attitude toward their work, this can affect their performance. Employees who are not satisfied, committed and engaged in their work are difficult to work with and they hinder the creation of positive ideas and infect their co-workers with their bad behavior. This is believed to have led to low organizational performance. Despite the extensive research on professional work ethics in construction projects, the area of construction consultancy has not been looked into, including identifying the relationship with productivity. It is against this backdrop that this study intends to examine the impact of Professional work ethics on productivity in construction consultancy.

Objectives of the study are to:

1. To identify work ethics practiced by consultants in Enugu and Anambra States.
2. To evaluate the impact of these worth ethics, with emphasis on construction practice in Enugu and Anambra States.

Statement of Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant impact of work ethics on productivity in Enugu and Anambra States

2.0 Review of Relevant Literature

2.1 Concept of work Ethics

Tracing the root word of ethics comes from the Greek word, "ethos" which means moral character, habitual character, and disposition, habit, customs, manners, and the Latin word for ethics is "mos" (genitimoreors) and in plural form is "mores" which means customs, precepts, law, rule, conduct, behavior, character, manners, and morals/ethics. (Abun, Julian & Balloesteros, 2022). The conventional interpretations of the term "ethics" encompass its characterization as a collection of rules or guidelines that dictate appropriate conduct (Lawal ,2023). According to Ongaonga and Akaranga (2018), a code of ethics refers to a formal declaration of corporate principles, ethical standards, rules of behaviour, professional conduct, or organisational philosophy pertaining to the obligations towards employees, shareholders, consumers, the environment, and other societal elements beyond the confines of the entity.

Workplace ethics is a framework of moral standards that are used in the workplace. It is a completely new field of study because it incorporates political theory, legal doctrine, philosophical writings, and historical records. A professional work ethics, refers to a set of values, principles, and behaviours that guide an individual's behaviour and attitude in the workplace.

2.2 Types of work ethics

1. **Confidentiality**: Protecting sensitive client information is paramount. Breaches of confidentiality not only damage client trust but may also lead to legal consequences. Consultants must rigorously safeguard proprietary data and ensure its use is aligned with the client's consent.

2. **Conflict of Interest**: Consultants should avoid situations where their personal or financial interests may influence their advice. If conflicts arise, these should be fully disclosed, and measures should be taken to ensure unbiased recommendations

3. **Competence and Transparency**: Consultants are ethically obligated to provide services within their areas of expertise. Offering services outside one's competencies can lead to subpar solutions and damage the consulting profession's reputation. Committing to transparency requires making business information and policies available to appropriate groups, such as financial investors, personnel and consumers. It includes, for example, sharing criteria for price hikes, wages, hiring, granting promotions, addressing workplace infringements and firing employees.

4. **Responsibility**: Consultants exhibit responsibility by taking full ownership of their jobs, striving to be conscious of the emotional, financial and business consequences of their actions. Taking their responsibilities seriously also demonstrates employee maturity and ability to do a job without needing strict supervision.

5. **Honesty:** All personnel must be committed to telling the truth in all forms of communication and in all actions. This includes never purposely telling partial truths, selectively omitting information, making misrepresentations or overstatements. Honesty also means reliably sharing both good and bad news with equal candor.

6. **Fairness:** All dealings and relationships must be founded on a conscious commitment to fairness, treating others as you would like to be treated. Fairness requires treating all individuals equally and courteously, never exercising power arbitrarily and never exploiting weaknesses or mistakes for personal or corporate benefit.

7. **Loyalty**: Loyalty is proven by never disclosing information learned in confidence and by remaining faithful to coworkers, clients, business partners and suppliers. Loyal employees avoid conflicts of interest, help build and protect the good reputation of their company and help boost the morale of their coworkers.

8. **Integrity:** According to Mocamber (2019), integrity is thought of as the sincerity and truthfulness of a person's deeds. Organizations and personnel demonstrate integrity through a consistency between actions and words that inspires trust and credibility. Integrity also means keeping promises, honoring commitments, meeting deadlines and refusing to participate in unscrupulous activities or business dealings. The core message has not changed: integrity often refers to a quality of a person's character but is always about 'doing the right thing'. Integrity, therefore, is the cornerstone of professional behaviour. Amongst other things it is essential that the profession, as a whole, retains its reputation for honesty, straightforwardness, fair dealing, and truthfulness: without this, the profession will lose credibility.

   Trust is the cornerstone of management consulting. As such, it's essential that consultants in Nigeria demonstrate ethical behavior and uphold a standard of integrity.

9. **Accountability:** Accountability requires a total commitment to the ethical quality of all decisions, actions and relationships. High expectations for ethical behavior drive business

practices when an organization and its personnel are held accountable to fellow employees, consumers, the local community and the wider public in general.

10. **Respect**: Respect is demonstrated by a full commitment to the human rights, dignity, autonomy, interests and privacy of all personnel. It means recognizing that everyone deserves equal respect and support for sharing ideas and opinions, without fear of any penalty or form of discrimination.

11. **Law-abiding:** Organizations must fully comply with all applicable laws and codes from local, state and federal agencies. Law-abiding businesses and personnel also adhere to industry and trade regulations, marketplace standards and any additional mandatory organizational policies, practices and procedures.

12. **Compassion**: Fostering a business environment of empathy and compassion requires a commitment to being kind and caring toward all personnel, business partners and customers. Business goals must be benevolent, ensured by spending enough time to understand the needs and sensitivities of others, including the local community.

13. **Leadership:** Demonstrated by a conscious effort to set a positive example of ethical behavior, leadership is a commitment to excellence through ethical decision-making. Businesses and business executives maintain their leads by constantly improving operational efficiency, worker satisfaction and customer approval.

2.3 Benefits of Work ethics application

According to Gopalakrishnan (2024), Some of the benefits that accrue when organizations and systems follow work ethics could be summarised here under:

I. I). Builds up a good work atmosphere, creates confidence in employees, and builds cooperative teamwork, increased productivity
II. II). Creates a pleasant work environment, makes the entire workspace enjoyable
III. III). Assists when people move beyond the comfort zone and helps people through severe stress and tough times
IV. IV). Helps individuals get the desired recognition for their contributions for the work delivered
V. V). Leads to entrepreneurial and business successes
VI. VI). Aids in developing additional leadership and interpersonal skills, and foster good relations amongst coworker

They are various benefits of work ethics application. Some of them include
:

1. **Builds a Positive Corporate Culture**: An organization devoting resources to developing policies and procedures that encourage ethical actions builds a positive corporate culture. Team member morale improves when employees feel protected against retaliation for personal beliefs. These policies include anti-discriminatory rules, open door policies and equal opportunities for growth. When employees feel good about being at work, the overall feeling in the organization is more positive and increases productivity,

2. **Boosts Consumer Confidence:** An organization can lose consumer confidence very quickly with a few bad online reviews. Organizations have to retain consumer loyalty through ethical practices that start with fair and honest advertising methods and continue through the entire sales process. One area that organizations can lose consumer confidence is failing to honor guarantees or negatively deal with complaints. This is why consistent policies and employee training is imperative. Companies must direct employees on how to treat customers according to its core values (Pattison and Edgar, 2011).

3. **Reduces Financial Liabilities**: Organizations that don't develop policies on ethical standards risk financial liabilities. The first liability is a reduction in sales. For example, a real estate development company can lose customer interest and sales if its development reduces the size of an animal sanctuary. This doesn't mean a company must abandon growth. Finding an ethically responsible middle ground is imperative to sway public opinion away from corporate greed and toward environmental responsibility (Rajendran and Raduan, 2005).

4. **Build Customer Loyalty**: Having a loyal customer base is one of the keys to long-range business success because serving an existing customer doesn't involve marketing cost, as does acquiring a new one (Robbins and Judge 2007 as cited by Amobi, 2021). Consumers may let a company take advantage of them once, but if they believe they have been treated unfairly, such as by being overcharged, they will not be repeat customers.

5. **Enhance a Company's Reputation:** When organizations set out clear ethical standards for their workplace, they can typically enjoy an improved public image. A company's reputation for ethical behavior can help it create a more positive image in the marketplace, which can bring in new customers through word-of-mouth referrals. Conversely, a reputation for unethical dealings hurts the company's chances to obtain new customers, particularly in this age of social networking when dissatisfied customers can quickly

disseminate information about the negative experience they had (Obasi, 2003 as cited by Amobi, 2021).

6. **Retain Good Employees:** Talented individuals at all levels of an organization want to be compensated fairly for their work and dedication. They want career advancement within the organization to be based on the quality of the work they do and not on favoritism. They want to be part of a company whose management team tells them the truth about what is going on, such as when layoffs or reorganizations are being contemplated. Companies who are fair and open in their dealings with employees have a better chance of retaining the most talented people.

7. **Positive Work Environment**: Employees have a responsibility to be ethical from the moment they have their first job interview. They must be honest about their capabilities and experience. Ethical employees are perceived as team players rather than as individuals just out for themselves. They develop positive relationships with coworkers. Their supervisors trust them with confidential information and they are often given more autonomy as a result (Obasi, 2003 as cited by Amobi, 2021). Employees who are caught in lies by their supervisors damage their chances of advancement within the organization and may risk being fired.

8. **Avoid or Minimize Legal Problems:** At times, a company's management may be tempted to cut corners in pursuit of profit, such as not fully complying with environmental regulations or labor laws, ignoring worker safety hazards or using substandard materials in their products. The penalties for being caught can be severe, including legal fees and fines or sanctions by governmental agencies. The resulting negative publicity can cause long-range damage to the company's reputation that is even more costly than the legal fees or fines. It is important for Companies to regularly train every member of the organization about the conduct that is expected of them in other to maintain ethical standards.

9. **Employee satisfaction:** When organizations express their commitment to maintaining high ethical standards, they usually treat employees better and encourage staff to act laterally under the same premises. These ethical standards help establish a certain expectation for how organizational operations affect stakeholders' wellbeing and personal interests. When organizations and stakeholders follow through in upholding ethical standards, they can create a workplace environment where individuals feel respected, heard and satisfied in their roles. With this higher rate of satisfaction, organizations can often reduce staff turnover and more easily attract new, talented candidates to work for them.

10. **Streamlined decision-making processes**: When organizations establish ethical codes of conduct in the workplace, they foster a culture designed to uphold such standards. These guidelines can help organizational leaders make streamlined decisions and solve problems efficiently when challenges arise. When leaders have specific ethical expectations set out for them, they can use these expectations to direct their choices and manage conflicts with simplicity. Such streamlined decision-making processes can lead to a high level of organizational consistency in the long term.

11. **Improves Work productivity:** Productivity is very significant concept in business world as it contributes to the successfulness of the organizations. It is the success of meeting predefined objectives, targets, and goals within a specified time target. Also, it involves the comparison between the input against the output in all sectors (Alkadash, *et.al*., 2020; Leen & Qais, 2020). Employees' productivity is critical to raise employees' performance which contributes to the success of organizations. When the employees tend to be productive, they perform a particular task more efficiently and effectively within a given time frame, on the contrary take a longer time to perform a particular task costing money if they are unproductive at work.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The targeted population in this study comprises of construction consultancy firms practicing in Enugu and Anambra States. The study used purposive sampling technique where data was collected from 40 randomly selected consultancy firms, 20 from each state. A structured questionnaire was the instrument used to collect primary data for the study. From each firm, two (2) questionnaires were administered making it a total of Eighty (80) questionnaires, while fifty-six (56) were retrieved yielding a response rate of 70%. The section A of the questionnaire contains the following respondents' particulars: Age, gender, gender, educational qualification, professional qualification, working experiences in the construction industry. Section B of the questionnaire contains questions on the subject matter of identifying and evaluating the impact of Professional work ethics on productivity in construction consultancy. A 4-point Likert scale was used, the scale is: 1-No impact, 2-little impact, 3-high impact and 4-very high impact. The Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to carry out the analysis. The demographic details of the respondents were produced and the mean rank of the identified factors in the objectives was used for the ranking in the analysis.

Statement of Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant impact of work ethics on productivity in Enugu and Anambra States

4.0 Results and Discussion

Fifty-six (56) questionnaires were collected back from respondents and used for the analysis. The demographic details of the respondents are presented in table 1

Table 1: Demographic details of the respondents

	Variables	Frequency	Cum Frequency	Percentage	Cum Percentage
I	Sex (N=56)				
	Male	42	42	75	75
	Female	14	56	25	100
II	Age (N=56)				
	Below 25 years	-	-	-	-
	25-34 years	08	08	14	14
	35-44 years	34	42	61	75
	45 years and above	14	56	25	100
III	Educational qualification (N=56)				
	HND	18	18	32	32
	BSc	26	44	47	79
	MSc	12	56	21	100
	Ph.D.	-	-	-	-
IV	Professional Membership (N=56)				
	ARCON	22	22	39	39
	QSRBN	10	32	18	57
	COREN	24	56	43	100
V	Working Experiences in the Construction Industry (N=56)				
	Less than 10 years	16	16	28	28
	10-20 years	29	45	52	80
	21-30 years	11	56	20	100

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

Table 1 (I-V) of the survey shows that 75% of the respondents are male while 25% are female. Age distribution shows 25-34 years are 14%, 35-44 years are 61% while 25% are 45years and above. Educational qualification of the respondents shows that HND (32%), BSc (47%) and MSc (21%). They are all registered with their respective professional bodies. ARCON is 39%, QSRBN is 18 % and COREN is 43%. Working experience of the respondents; less than 10 years (28%), 10-20 years (52%) and 21-30 years and above, 20%. This a true reflection of category of respondents needed for this research and the data supplied by these respondents are considered to be adequate and reliable.

Table 2: Identified Professional Work Ethics associated with construction consultancy

Professional work ethics	Mean	Rank
Integrity	3.92	1
Respect	3.74	3
Competence and Transparency	3.42	5
Conflict of Interest	2.95	11
Honesty	3.21	8
Fairness	3.35	6
Loyalty	2.89	12
Responsibility	3.81	2
Accountability	3.55	4
Confidentiality	3.28	7
Law-abiding	3.04	10
Compassion	3.16	9
Leadership	2.56	13

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

Table 2 revealed that the most selected professional ethics is Integrity with a mean score of 3.92 and responsibility with the mean score of 3.81 and the least is leadership with mean score of 2.56. 10 out of 13 of the ethics have above 3.00 (high impact) which indicates that these professional ethics have significant.

Table 3: Impact of Professional work ethics on productivity

Impact	Mean	Rank
Improved public reputation	3.67	1
Enhances Company reputation	3.21	9
Positive Work Environment	3.67	2
Improved workplace culture	3.30	8
Boosts Consumer Confidence	3.66	3
Reduces Financial Liability	3.52	4
Leads to entrepreneurial and business successes	3.00	12
Retain Good Employees	3.52	5
Minimizes Potential Lawsuits	3.50	6
Build a positive competent culture	3.39	7
Streamline decision making processes	3.00	11
Builds Customer engagement and loyalty	3.18	10

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

In table 3, evaluation of these professional ethics brings about improved public reputation (3.67), positive work environment (3.67) and boost customer confidence (3.66). These show that all will be reflected when work ethics are implemented with each having above 3.00 mean score. Furthermore, if professional work ethics are implemented, there will be lesser problem with productivity.

Table 4: Relationship between key professional work ethics and productivity

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					F Change	Sig. F Change
	0.785	0.617	0.63	2.4248	23.431	0.000

Table 4 shows that R^2 is 0.617. This means that 61.7% of the professional work ethics accounts for productivity in Anambra and Enugu States. The relationship model is very reliable since F Change is 0.000. The work ethics not covered in this study are 38.2%. further research into those ethics can improve value of R^2. This however those not affect the integrity of our findings.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

Work Ethics is needed in all spheres of activities. It sets standards under which businesses can flourish. This study identified integrity as the major work ethics associated with construction consultancy. This is in line with Piotr (2014) who stated that integrity is one of the most fundamental virtues, which Aristotle calls practical wisdom and they are necessary for any ethical professional practice. The study revealed that all the identified professional ethics are significant and important. This supports Egbebi, (2024), who opined that work ethics influences every facet of project planning, execution, and completion and such all should be taken seriously.

To avoid pitfalls, like reputational damages, loss of client trust and legal repercussions, consultants must remain vigilant in their ethical decision-making and always prioritize the client's best interests over personal gain while discharging their duties. In addition, Ethical challenges can be addressed by fostering a culture of ethics within organizations. Inculcating professional work ethics in day-to-day work can improve the work performance and productivity of individuals at the workplace and subsequently affect organizational growth.

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